

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to attend votes on Tuesday, January 10, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for consideration of both H.R. 5 and H.R. 79—Vote “no”; H. Res. 33—Rule providing for consideration of both H.R. 5 (Regulatory Accountability Act of 2017) and H.R. 79 (HALOS Act)—Vote “no”; H.R. 79—Velázquez Amendment Made in Order—Vote “yes”; H.R. 79—Clay Amendment Made in Order—Vote “yes”; H.R. 79—Final Passage—Vote “no”.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 78, SEC REGULATORY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 238, COMMODITY END-USER RELIEF ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. NEWHOUSE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-3) on the resolution (H. Res. 40) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 78) to improve the consideration by the Securities and Exchange Commission of the costs and benefits of its regulations and orders; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 238) to reauthorize the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, to better protect futures customers, to provide end-users with market certainty, to make basic reforms to ensure transparency and accountability at the Commission, to help farmers, ranchers, and end-users manage risks, to help keep consumer costs low, and for other purposes; and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1800

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the additional motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

TESTED ABILITY TO LEVERAGE EXCEPTIONAL NATIONAL TALENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 39) to amend title 5, United States Code, to codify the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.
The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 39

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Tested Ability to Leverage Exceptional National Talent Act of 2017” or the “TALENT Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. PRESIDENTIAL INNOVATION FELLOWS PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 31 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SUBCHAPTER V—PRESIDENTIAL INNOVATION FELLOWS PROGRAM

“§ 3171. Presidential Innovation Fellows Program

“(a) POLICY.—It is in the national interest for the Government to attract the brightest minds skilled in technology or innovative practices to serve in the Government to work on some of the Nation’s biggest and most pressing challenges. This subchapter establishes a program to encourage successful entrepreneurs, executives, and innovators to join the Government and work in close cooperation with Government leaders, to create meaningful solutions that can help save lives and taxpayer money, fuel job creation, and significantly improve how the Government serves the American people.

“(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of General Services shall continue the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program (hereinafter referred to as the ‘Program’) to enable exceptional individuals with proven track records to serve time-limited appointments in executive agencies to address some of the Nation’s most significant challenges and improve existing Government efforts that would particularly benefit from expertise using innovative techniques and technology.

“(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The Program shall be administered by a Director, appointed by the Administrator under authorities of the General Services Administration. The Administrator shall provide necessary staff, resources and administrative support for the Program.

“(d) APPOINTMENT OF FELLOWS.—The Director shall appoint fellows pursuant to the Program and, in cooperation with executive agencies, shall facilitate placement of fellows to participate in projects that have the potential for significant positive effects and are consistent with the President’s goals.

“(e) APPLICATION PROCESS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall prescribe the process for applications and nominations of individuals to the Program.

“(2) PROGRAM STANDARDS.—Following publication of these processes, the Director may accept for consideration applications from individuals. The Director shall establish, administer, review, and revise, if appropriate, a Governmentwide cap on the number of fellows. The Director shall establish and publish salary ranges, benefits, and standards for the Program.

“(f) SELECTION, APPOINTMENT, AND ASSIGNMENT OF FELLOWS.—

“(1) PROCEDURES.—The Director shall prescribe appropriate procedures for the selection, appointment, and assignment of fellows.

“(2) CONSULTATION.—Prior to the selection of fellows, the Director shall consult with the heads of executive agencies regarding potential projects and how best to meet those needs. Following such consultation, the Director shall select and appoint individuals to serve as fellows.

“(3) TIME LIMITATION.—Fellows selected for the Program shall serve under short-term, time-limited appointments. Such fellows shall be appointed for no less than 6 months and no longer than 2 years in the Program. The Director shall facilitate the process of placing fellows at requesting executive agencies.

“(g) RESPONSIBILITIES OF AGENCIES.—Each executive agency shall work with the Direc-

tor and the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program advisory board established under section 3172 to attempt to maximize the Program’s benefits to the agency and the Government, including by identifying initiatives that have a meaningful effect on the people served and that benefit from involvement by one or more fellows. Such agencies shall ensure that each fellow works closely with responsible senior officials for the duration of the assignment.

“§ 3172. Presidential Innovation Fellows Program advisory board

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of General Services shall continue an advisory board to advise the Director of the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program by recommending such priorities and standards as may be beneficial to fulfill the mission of the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program and assist in identifying potential projects and placements for fellows. The advisory board may not participate in the selection process under section 3171(f).

“(b) CHAIR; MEMBERSHIP.—The Administrator shall designate a representative to serve as the Chair of the advisory board. In addition to the Chair, the membership of the advisory board shall include—

“(1) the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget;

“(2) the Director of the Office of Personnel Management;

“(3) the Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government of the Office of Management and Budget;

“(4) the Assistant to the President and Chief Technology Officer; and

“(5) other individuals as may be designated by the Administrator.

“(c) CONSULTATION.—The advisory board may consult with industry, academia, or nonprofits to ensure the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program is continually identifying opportunities to apply advanced skillsets and innovative practices in effective ways to address the Nation’s most significant challenges.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 31 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SUBCHAPTER V—PRESIDENTIAL INNOVATION FELLOWS PROGRAM

“3171. Presidential Innovation Fellows Program.

“3172. Presidential Innovation Fellows Program advisory board.”.

(c) TRANSITION.—The Presidential Innovation Fellows Program established pursuant to Executive Order 13704 (5 U.S.C. 3301 note) as in existence on the day before the date of enactment of this Act shall be considered the Presidential Innovation Fellows Program described in the amendments made by this Act.

(d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act. This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) and the gentleman from California (Mr. DESAULNIER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the majority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, the government is many things. It is large, it is complicated, and it is ineffective. I don't think anyone would call it modern. While the world is rushing forward with things like voice-based interfaces, autonomous vehicles, online retail, and data analytics, government is stubbornly years, or even decades, behind.

We do not have to accept it. One of the purposes of the Innovation Initiative, our effort here in the House, is to bring government into the modern age.

Right now, it can still take hours for citizens to get the IRS on the phone to ask the most basic questions. Parents and students still deal with the clunky user interfaces when applying for tuition assistance. And the VA still uses a scheduling system that is a quarter century old. It doesn't have to be this way.

We have a program right now, the Presidential Innovation Fellows program, that brings in highly talented professionals from across the country to help upgrade our government's use of technology. Now, these are engineers, designers, innovators, and thinkers. They challenge the old ways of thinking and introduce new approaches to make our government work the way the American people deserve it to work.

I sponsored the TALENT Act to make sure this innovation program continues into the future. By drawing on the great talent of the American people, we can make government effective, efficient, and accountable.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of the TALENT Act, a bill to ensure that we continue to bring top private sector innovators into government to help solve complex technological problems at Federal agencies.

The Presidential Innovation Fellows program was established by President Obama in 2012 to identify and pursue projects that apply and implement innovative private sector techniques in as little as 6 months. The program was made permanent by Executive Order 13704 in 2015, and would be codified by the bill before us today.

H.R. 39 would require the General Services Administration to continue managing the program with guidance from an advisory board comprised of representatives from different executive branch agencies. Over 100 Presidential Innovation Fellows have already been appointed to work alongside dedicated civil servants at 25 Federal agencies and departments.

At those agencies, fellows have been able to merge their experience from

top universities, pioneering companies, and successful nonprofits with their desire to contribute to society through public service. This collaboration has allowed the Federal Government to obtain new tools, develop new technologies, and ultimately become more effective and efficient.

Presidential Innovation Fellows have reshaped the way Americans interact with their government in areas ranging from health care and science to law enforcement and disaster response. Fifteen million Americans can access their health data as a result of the program's Blue Button initiative, and cancer patients can search for clinical trials as part of work to support the Vice President's Cancer Moonshot initiative.

Scientists can now obtain more weather data collected by NOAA, and veterans can now more readily access custom prosthetic designs.

Citizens can review police records, including crime statistics and data on officer-involved shootings. And FEMA and other first responders can better target and prioritize their response to natural disasters.

All of these things have been made possible through the Presidential Innovation Fellows program, and it is crucial that we continue our support of these and other endeavors by ensuring its permanency.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 39.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, I am urging my colleagues to support H.R. 39, the TALENT Act, introduced by Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY of California. This bill passed the House on a strong bipartisan vote in the 114th Congress, and I am glad to be part of the team working to enact this important legislation into law.

The TALENT Act makes permanent the Presidential Innovation Fellows program that was created in 2012. This highly competitive program recruits talented, private sector innovators and technologists from across the United States.

Presidential Innovation Fellows serve in the Washington, D.C., area for 12 months at an executive agency. These agencies include the Department of Energy, NASA, and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Fellows bring with them their experience in the private sector to help government turn ideas into tangible results that ultimately benefit the American people. Since 2012, at least 96 top innovators have participated in the program.

Past and current fellows have come from companies large and small and hold degrees from top universities across the country. They have won a variety of awards, including Fulbright scholarships, Silicon Valley Business Journal's 40 Under 40 recognition, and Truman National Security Project fel-

lowships. These fellows truly are the best and the brightest the United States has to offer, and they seek to utilize their skills for the American people.

Presidential Innovation Fellows are giving the Federal Government the tools it needs to successfully operate in the 21st century. Previous projects completed by fellows include Uncle Sam's List. Fellows created a database to offer a centralized information center in which agencies can forgo buying new commodity IT and support services in favor of existing services provided by the Federal agencies. This program has saved an estimated \$2.5 billion, and it is helping government become more effective and efficient.

I commend Majority Leader MCCARTHY for the work to bring this innovation to the government. Again, I urge support for this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative HURD for his work, which has been an ongoing continuing work on this issue and on this particular program.

I rise in support of this bipartisan bill, which builds on the work that Majority Leader MCCARTHY and I and others in this House have been doing to modernize government technology and renew America's faith in government.

In 2016, exit polls showed that dissatisfaction with the government spanned the political spectrum. That is a shame because government is supposed to be a force for improving people's lives, keeping our country safe, and expanding opportunities for all Americans.

That is why I unveiled the House Democrats' Renewing Faith in Government agenda last summer. We must present bold solutions to reform our democracy and our government. Certainly, on both sides of the equation, that is what the American people were saying in the last election.

One of the goals of our agenda is modernizing government technology. Most Americans understand the transformative power of technology—the Majority Leader spoke of it in so many different aspects of our lives—and how digitizing businesses makes them more efficient, transparent, and accountable. We have seen it in the private sector. Every day, millions of Americans shop on sites like Amazon or Etsy and catch a ride using Uber or Lyft.

Government technology is in terrible shape, and bringing the latest practices from Silicon Valley into government would make a huge difference in serving our citizens and streamlining the way government works for the American people.

Last year, I worked closely with the Obama administration and Tony Scott to advance one of its top priorities in this area: creating a technology modernization fund for the rapid upgrade of

the most outdated, costly, and insecure technology systems across the Federal Government. Mr. HURD was involved deeply in that effort. The result was the Modernizing Government Technology Act, which the House passed overwhelmingly with the help of Chairman CHAFFETZ and Majority Leader MCCARTHY.

Last month, Majority Leader MCCARTHY and I expressed our bipartisan support for one of President Obama's most successful efforts at bringing Silicon Valley talent into the Federal workforce: the U.S. Digital Service and GSA's 18F program. In fact, I visited the 18F program in San Francisco and was extraordinarily impressed with the individuals who peopled that project and were giving of their time. I guess we were paying them a little bit, but, relatively speaking, they were giving their time.

Today's bill, the TALENT Act, would make permanent the precursor to both these programs: the Presidential Innovation Fellows. This program has a proven track record of bringing top talent from the innovation economy into the Federal workforce where it is sorely needed.

I hope the next administration will continue all of these innovative programs, which have begun to change the culture within our government.

I also hope that the talented individuals—many of whom, as I referenced, left high-paying jobs in the private sector—will stay on through the transition and continue to serve their country by improving government technology.

President Obama made real progress in this area, including with the launch of his Open Data Directive, his We the People petition platform, and his Cyber National Action Plan. More could have been achieved if Congress had agreed to his request to invest more in these areas. We have seen a dramatic example of why cybersecurity investment is so critically important for our country, not for Democrats, not for Republicans, but for all Americans. This is an effort toward that end.

I hope we can work together in this new Congress to unleash the transformative power of modern technology within government and help renew America's faith in our government. That is critical if we are to be successful as a Nation. I am sure it hopefully is what all of us want to do on a bipartisan basis.

I thank Representative DESAULNIER for his efforts, and I thank Representative HURD for his leadership on this effort.

I am pleased to join with my counterpart, Majority Leader MCCARTHY, in strong support of this legislation.

□ 1815

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the gentleman from California aware that I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I just briefly congratulate everyone who has been involved. As somebody who represents the bay area and struggles with the innovation in the private sector there to integrate it into the public sector at all levels of government, I really admire the work by Mr. HURD, the comments and the contributions by the administration, and Mr. MCCARTHY and Mr. HOYER.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on our side. I congratulate Mr. HURD.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to thank for their years of service on such an important issue Mr. DESAULNIER and Leader HOYER and Leader MCCARTHY.

I would like to urge the adoption of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 39.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. HURD. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NORTH KOREA MISCHIEF

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week, North Korea declared that it can launch an intercontinental ballistic missile at any time that it wishes.

Even our own Deputy Secretary of State recently warned that Little Kim's weapon capabilities have shown qualitative improvement within the past year resulting in "unprecedented level of activity."

Why is that?

Well, because this administration has done little to stop Little Kim. Instead, the administration has naively pursued a strategy it calls "strategic patience."

Strategic patience is a fancy phrase for ignoring the obvious. There was a time when we kept North Korea on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List. They came off the list because they have made promises that they have clearly broken.

Mischievous Little Kim's threats continue to grow bolder and bolder, with no repercussions. We cannot afford to risk the security of our citizens for the sake of diplomatic strategy that has proven to be a failure.

This week I will reintroduce legislation to put North Korea back on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List be-

cause Little Kim is a terror to world peace.

And that is just the way it is.

GIVING THANKS

(Ms. BARRAGÁN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give thanks. I give thanks to the people of California's 44th District for giving me the honor and the privilege to serve them.

My district is rich with immigrants. My own mom, who turned 76 today, is an immigrant from Mexico who came here with a third grade education so her kids could have a shot at the American Dream.

In my district, only 10 percent of students go on to college. I am grateful to be one of those 10 percenters who beat the odds and got a piece of the American Dream.

But those numbers are unacceptable. I pledge to fight for them to make sure everyone, regardless of income, immigration status, or race has a shot at the American Dream.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FERGUSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor to be here and, especially, to look out and see some people for whom I have eminent respect in this body. That is a nice thing, being in a body where I actually have respect for the people in the body, a good thing.

We know that elections, as President Obama told us quite succinctly 8 years ago, have consequences. Elections do have consequences, and we have a new team coming to town. One of the things that has concerned me greatly, and I know it has concerned many in this body, is that we as a Nation have had the ability to give protection basically to this idea of freedom that our Founders had, cultivated, and gave their lives to create.

As I have mentioned from this podium previously, as I was told by some west African Christians in Togo, they said:

We were so excited when you elected your first Black President, but since your President has been there, we have seen America get weaker and weaker. We all are Christians and we know where we are going when we die, but we also know our only chance for peace in this world is if America is strong. So please go back to Washington and please tell the other Members of Congress to stop getting weaker. We suffer when you get weaker.

I seen this article from Melissa Mullins after a study was done. It said, "Christians Most Persecuted Religious